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## **Senate passes legislation to expand business and job opportunities for private labs**

**LANSING** – The approximately 90 commercial labs in Michigan that do environmental testing would have more chances to work on state contracts resulting in more job opportunities under legislation passed Thursday in the Senate, Sen. Patty Birkholz announced.

The legislation would create a voluntary lab data quality recognition program for all labs wishing to be considered eligible for state lab work contracts. The Senate overwhelmingly passed House Bill 5742, which would allow labs to submit their data to be compared against uniform performance standards before bidding on state jobs.

“The state needs to be assured that the data they receive from private labs is top quality and this voluntary program will help them do that,” said Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Township. “In addition, allowing private companies to do state environmental testing will certainly help to provide more job opportunities for Michigan’s residents.”

Birkholz estimates that this legislation will mean a potential increase in private lab work of more than \$2 million annually.

The legislation is part of the Republican JOBS Action Plan, a broad initiative for revitalizing Michigan’s economy. JOBS continues the effort of creating new job opportunities, saving existing jobs, and promoting a friendlier and healthier business climate in Michigan.

The Senate also passed HB 5743 that creates a requirement for the auditor general to conduct a cost comparison when a private company does state lab work. It is estimated that privatizing more of the state lab work could result in lower costs while at the same time ensuring good quality lab data.

These bills are tie-barred to Senate Bill 1135 which creates a special advisory council to study the new lab quality data recognition program and review its effectiveness and cost efficiency.

“Privatizing this lab work will give the state more flexibility while still allowing them to ensure quality testing of our natural resources,” said Birkholz, chair of the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee.

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